

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

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Make Heart-Healthy Lifestyle Changes

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, causing one in four deaths each year ([nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)). During National Heart Month, the Howard County Health Department, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition, and Howard County Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) have joined forces to encourage residents to make positive lifestyle changes to improve their heart health.

Offered via Webex, a series of free, weekly seminars will demonstrate that small lifestyle changes are achievable and worth the effort! Each week offers a different perspective on heart health: 1) a clinical/medical focus; 2) nutrition; 3) movement; and 4) mental health.

Use the Individual meeting links below each description to join that specific seminar (meeting password: Hoco50+).

Heart Medications Explained

Wednesday, February 3 • 2:00 pm

Learn about medication treatments for common heart-related conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Questions will be answered as time permits. Presented by Fariborz Zarfeshan, R.Ph.

Meeting number: 180 336 2713 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/3nzPxKF>

Tasty Tidbits: Cooking Smart for Your Heart

Monday, February 8 • 2:00 pm

Find out which foods can keep your blood pressure low and your heart healthy. Explore the benefits foods that provide the most nutrients to the heart and learn how to make a heart-healthy meal. Presented by Brandy Leno.

Meeting number: 180 297 5953 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/3bjT7WH>

Best Diets for Heart Health

Tuesday, February 9 • 3:00 pm

Join OAI Nutritionist Carmen Roberts, R.D., for an overview of some of the best diets that support heart health. Learn how these diets promote healthy heart function.

Meeting number: 180 395 4719 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/3nuNqHl>

Healthy Heart 101: Working Out

Wednesday, February 17 • NOON

Learn how aerobic exercise supports a heart-healthy lifestyle, and why increasing your heart rate is worth the effort! Presented by Malarie Burgess, OAI Exercise Specialist.

Meeting number: 180 443 4897 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/35DUDiT>

Healthy Heart 102: Settling Down

Friday, February 19 • 1:00 pm

Get insights on how softer movement like stretching and yoga and breathing exercises help to reduce stress and support heart health. Presented by Jeannie DeCray, Director, Elkridge 50+ Center

Meeting number: 180 017 5238 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/2LbZOKl>



A Message from Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball



This February, as we celebrate Black History Month, we want to recognize the heroes that live amongst us every day. You may have heard about Vivian “Millie” Bailey last year when at the young age of 102, decided to go skydiving. Her jump was featured on Good Morning America, CBS Evening News, in People Magazine, and even mentioned by Oprah. In Howard County, Millie is known for her dedication to our country as a WWII veteran and for her decades of charitable work. We recognized her contributions by naming our newest park in her honor. If you have not already done so, be sure to visit the Millie Bailey Neighborhood Square in Downtown Columbia.

Millie’s courage and compassion is a shining example of how our aging residents contribute to our community every day. During National Heart Month, we encourage all older adults to check-in with their medical providers — do not put off any medical challenges you may be facing because of COVID-19. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for many residents, and it is vital that you address your risk and take appropriate action.

While the pandemic continues to affect our community, we now have hope on the horizon with vaccine distribution underway. If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine or the phases of its distribution, please visit bit.ly/HoCOVIDVaccine.

(continued on next page)

Seven Simple Steps to Improve Heart Health

By Carmen Roberts, MS, RD, LDN, Nutritionist
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

Heat disease is a leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. To reduce your risk of heart disease, make heart-healthy changes to your diet — adding additional servings of fruits and vegetables to your plate, and limiting foods with high levels of saturated and trans fats and added sugars. Here are seven simple steps to put you on the path to a healthier heart:



STEP #1 — Decrease saturated and trans fats. Instead, choose mono- and polyunsaturated fats (found in olive and canola oil, nuts, seeds, avocados, flaxseed, and fatty fish).

STEP #2 — Eat more fruits and vegetables. Seven to nine servings of fruits and veggies each day provides antioxidants, vitamins and fiber that can help prevent disease. Eating from a rainbow of colors helps you to get a variety of nutrients.

STEP #3 — Eat more fiber. A diet rich in fiber can lower cholesterol and blood sugar, promote regularity, and prevent gastrointestinal disease. Aim for at least 25 grams each day. Soluble fiber provides the greatest heart-health benefit because it helps to lower cholesterol. Good sources include oats, barley, legumes (dried beans and lentils), psyllium, flaxseed, apples, and citrus fruits.

STEP #4 — Choose more meatless meals. Beef, pork, chicken with skin, and whole milk dairy products contain saturated fat, which increases your risk of heart disease. Try replacing some of these foods with plant-based proteins such as tofu, beans and legumes.

STEP #5 — Choose low-fat dairy products. Two to three servings of dairy each day is good for your heart, bone and blood pressure health. Choose skim or 1% milk, 1% or nonfat yogurt or cottage cheese, and reduced-fat cheeses.

STEP #6 — Maintain and achieve a healthy body weight. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about how you can achieve a healthy body mass index (BMI). A loss of just 5 to 10 percent of body weight can have a huge impact on your heart health. This means that a 200-pound person would have to lose only 10 to 20 pounds to achieve the health benefits.

STEP #7 — Stay active. Exercise improves blood pressure, cholesterol and heart health. Engaging in aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes a day can have tremendous heart-health benefits.

Lifestyle Changes

(continued from previous page)

Stress and Mental Health

Tuesday, February 23 • 11:00 am

Learn to recognize the signs of stress; understand older adult mental health concerns; and realize the impact stress has on overall health. Discussion focuses on reducing stress, stress management and finding resources. Presented by Karen Hull (OAI) and Heidi Weiss-Beedie (Howard County Health Department).

Meeting number: 180 962 0243 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/35kM248>

The Mind & Heart Connection

Thursday, February 25 • 1:00 pm

Discover the connection between stress/mental health and heart health. Identify ways to reduce or your risks for heart disease and learn heart health strategies to help manage stress. Presented by Kirsten Minor, Howard County Health Department

Meeting number: 180 268 2671 ▲ Link: <https://bit.ly/3q00iWf>

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Howard County Office on
Aging and Independence

Department of Community Resources and Services

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Kim Higdon Henry, Editor • Email: kahenry@howardcountymd.gov

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Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive